

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS, WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER  
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20307-5001

TX-4 Nursing Policy

21 July 2005

**Same Name Alert**

**1. PURPOSE:** To minimize confusion and ensure safe patient care when an inpatient unit has two or more patients with the same or similar last names.

**2. REFERENCE:** WRAMC Reg 40-114 Patient Identification Policy, 2 May 2005.

**2. SCOPE:** Applies to all nursing staff at WRAMC.

**3. PROCEDURE:**

a. When two or more patients from the same family are admitted; when two or more patients have names that look-alike or sound-alike; and when two or more patients on the unit have the same or similar last names the nursing staff will:

1) Tag the patient's chart in red with the words "NAME ALERT". Print the patient's first name boldly in red on the chart label.

2) Label the patient's door, all clip boards, stamper plates, census boards, and patient rosters with a red "NAME ALERT" label.

3) Label the Patient's identification band "NAME ALERT" using a green label.

4) Whenever possible, separate same name patients geographically or by nursing teams.

5) Ensure that patients with the same name are notified that another patient with their name is on the ward.

6) Whenever there is any question regarding the appropriateness of physician orders, contact the physician to verify that the orders were written for the correct patient.

b. When two or more patients with the same or similar last names are scheduled for surgery in the Operating Room on the same day, the nursing staff will:

1) Print "NAME ALERT" in red by each patient's name on the Operating Room schedule.

2) Call attention to the name alert during morning and afternoon shift reports, to include patients name and scheduled room.

3) Verify patient identification through the perioperative team surgical site verification checklist procedure.

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